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Claim 7 (amended). The apparatus as claimed in claim 1,  
characterized in that ejectors for the cut-out membranes (13)  
are integrated in each case in the cutting punches of the  
double cutting tool (11).

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Remarks:

The preliminary amendment is being filed in an effort to  
present an application in proper U.S. format and to present  
claims in proper U.S. claim idiom for examination.

An early action on the merits of the claims is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



For Applicants

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## VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Specification:

Page 1, line 1, [Description]

Page 12, top, [Patent claims] We claim:.

In the Claims:

Claim 4 (amended). The apparatus as claimed in [claims 1 to 3] claim 1, characterized in that the membrane-strip feed (12) to the cutting tool (11) is provided laterally above the membrane star (10).

Claim 5 (amended) The apparatus as claimed in [claims 1 to 4] claim 1, characterized in that the membrane-strip feed (12) to the cutting tool (11) is provided at a feed angle of approximately 30 degrees.

Claim 6 (amended). The apparatus as claimed in [claims 1 to 5] claim 1, characterized in that, during each resting phase (14) of the membrane star (10), in each case two membranes (13) can be transferred from the membrane strip (12), by way of a double cutting tool (11), to the membrane star (10).

Claim 7 (amended). The apparatus as claimed in [claims 1 to 6] claim 1, characterized in that ejectors for the cut-out

membranes (13) are integrated in each case in the cutting punches of the double cutting tool (11).